

Notes on *Pheidole* (Decapheidole) and the Description of a New Species (Hymenoptera: Formicidae).

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Recently there has been received for determination a number of unusually interesting specimens of *Pheidole*, subgenus *Decapheidole*. These specimens include a new species collected on Barro Colorado Island, Canal Zone, by James Zetek, and also specimens intercepted in plant shipments originating at Medellin, Colombia, and in Guatemala (precise locality not known). The Colombian collection is represented by a single worker, the Guatemalan, by soldiers and workers of a single species. Unfortunately I am unable to name the specimens from Colombia and Guatemala, owing to the very poor descriptions of both *perpusilla* and *decem*. On the other hand, the specimens from Barro Colorado Island possess such distinct and readily recognizable characters that I have no hesitancy in describing them as a new species, *zeteki*.

The ants of *Pheidole*, subgenus *Decapheidole*, bear such a striking resemblance to the various forms of *Pheidole* (*Pheidole*) *flavens* Roger that even an accomplished formicologist could easily err if he did not count the antennal segments, ants of the subgenus *Decapheidole* having 10 segments and those of *Pheidole* (*Pheidole*) *flavens*, 12 segments; in fact, Emery (1894, Soc. Ent. Ital. Bol. 26: 157) described *perpusilla* from soldier, worker, and female specimens from Pará, Brazil, as *Pheidole flavens perpusilla*. Forel (1901, Soc. Ent. de Belg. Ann. 45: 366) described a second species, *decem*, from soldier specimens collected in Trinidad (specific locality not cited), calling attention to its similarity to forms of the *flavens* group. Although Forel noted that the soldier had 10 segments in the antenna he did not establish a new subgenus for *perpusilla* and *decem* until 1912 (Soc. Ent.

de Belg. Mem. 19: 237), but even then he failed to designate a subgenotype. In 1913 Wheeler (N. Y. Acad. Sci. Ann. 23: 80) very appropriately chose *perpusilla* as the subgenotype.

There is very little information available on the biology of these ants. Emery remarked that the colony of *perpusilla* was found nesting under bark in a marshy area in Brazil, and Forel stated that soldiers of *decem* were collected from the trunk of a tree growing in a savannah in Trinidad. The *decem* soldiers were found crawling on the tree trunk in association with members of *Pheidole flavens* var. *gracilior* Forel.

Pheidole (Decapheidole) *zeteki*, new species

Worker: Length 1 mm. Head (exclusive of mandibles) measured through its greatest breadth and length approximately one and five-hundredths times as long as broad, with distinct but weakly emarginate posterior border, rounded posterior corners and convex sides. Eye located more than its greatest diameter from the base of the mandible; rather prominent, coarsely faceted, the border nearest the mandible forming a rather acute angle which is directed anteroventrally. Antenna 10-segmented. Scape long, the apex at least attaining the posterior border of the head; slender and curved at the base, noticeably enlarged apically. Antennal club approximately one and one-half times as long as the remainder of the funiculus, the last segment of the club distinctly longer than the combined length of the two preceding segments; funicular segments 2 to 5 inclusive broader than long. Frontal area impressed, subopaque, not clearly defined. Anterior border of clypeus rounded, entire. Mandible subtriangular. Promesonotum, in profile, moderately convex, the mesonotum sloping into the distinct but not unusually deep mesoepinotal impression. Base of epinotum, in profile, almost horizontal, bearing a pair of spines, the tips of which are directed lateroposteriorly and slightly upward, the spines approximately the length of the base

of the epinotum. Legs rather short, with incrassated femora and tibiae. Thorax, from above, without promesonotal suture; pronotal humeri very weakly developed, almost imperceptible; mesoepinotal impression rather broad but not deep. Postpetiolar node, from above, convex, approximately one and one-half times as broad as long, broadest in its anterior third. Gaster, from above, subglobular, with truncate base and rather definite humeral angles.

Head, thorax, petiole and postpetiole densely reticulate punctate; sculpturing of head and thorax very coarse, that of the petiole and postpetiole finer, so that the dorsal surface of each node is somewhat shining in certain lights.

Body with well scattered, long, coarse, suberect to erect hairs which appear truncate and enlarged apically; the hairs yellowish or gayish in color. Hairs on legs similar but usually shorter.

Head and thorax dull ferruginous, gaster and appendages lighter. Gaster shining, the appendages less shining.

Type locality: Barro Colorado Island, Canal Zone.

Described from a holotype and five paratype workers collected May to August 1945 by James Zetek. These bear the following label numbers: U. S. N. M. 58042, Zetek 5210, and Lot 45-16638 of the Division of Insect Identification. All specimens have been placed in the United States National Museum.

Paratypes do not differ noticeably in any respect from the holotype. Nothing is known of the biology of this new species.

The worker of *zeteki* can be readily recognized by its very characteristic type of pilosity and by the long antennal scape, the apex of which at least attains the posterior border of the head. A worker of *perpusilla* (in the collection of the United States National Museum), from the original colony but not definitely known to be a cotype, differs from that of *zeteki* in

its short antennal scape, the apex of which lacks a considerable distance of attaining the posterior border of the head, and by the hairs which are neither truncate nor enlarged apically. The hairs of *perpusilla* are also not coarse like those of *zeteki*. Only the soldier of *decem* has been described, but as soldiers and workers have similar pilosity Forel would undoubtedly have remarked about the peculiar pilosity if it were of the same nature as in *zeteki*.